

The User is the Content

10 scenarios for the future

edited by Ann Laenen & Stefan Kolgen

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10 SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE

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FOREWORD

It is entirely unnecessary to read this book. What is written here does not do justice to reality? 'Web 2.0' has in the meantime criticized, adapted, adopted and pulled these articles apart. You can listen to bits of them, all the photos are available and certain parts have in the meantime become unrecognizably part of other, possibly even more interesting articles. You can find all this on the web, as long as you have the right network of friends to point out the good quality bits.

This book was written more for all those who do not belong to that privileged virtual domain but would nevertheless like to read a collection of notable pieces about the future of internet publishing. The texts are the result of several discussions held on one particular day, 26 April 2007. At the request of the Flemish-Dutch Centre deBuren in Brussels, C.H.I.P.S. vzw then organised a seminar about publishing on internet.

deBuren is a home where the Netherlands and Flanders have lived and worked together culturally since June 2004. The intention of deBuren is to spread the culture of the Low Countries in the capital of Europe by means of information, documentation and presentation. The most prevalent activities are debates, talks and exhibitions. deBuren is also a platform for debate and reflection on Dutch and Flemish culture and society in a European context.

Several times a year deBuren organises day-long meetings where a number of specialised and notable minds gather to speak at length on a topic in the course of several sessions. We think we are thereby creating occasions that are quite unique. This is because 'the right people' rarely get together to exchange ideas for a long period without a set objective. These meetings, under the heading 'Mind Europe', ultimately result in new projects, singular writings and, on the same evening, a substantial public debate. The topics discussed are subjects we expect to be of interest to both Flemish and Dutch people, but above all to Europeans in general. Which is why the series is always in English.

One of the topics that occupies deBuren is whether, with all the new possibilities of the web, 'publishing' will be radically changed. What guarantees of quality still remain? Are the best publications always actually found? And, furthermore, what is the role of the cultural institutions? Should they play a pioneering role by opening up their creative archives so that everyone can freely use them? What happens when you put existing art, images, words and suchlike online and leave them to the user's imagination? Does it give rise to more and better content in addition to a whole range of material for private use?

Who is there left to show you the way to the best, most relevant and exciting 'content'? Should you, as a cultural institution, publisher or media player endeavor to give your public the best possible participation and involvement or do you wish rather to be a guide, leading your public through a jungle of misinformation and digital noise?

Considering the growth of communities on the internet, deBuren wonders whether it is positive to know what your friends are interested in, and what they read and watch. Does this mean that you are served better? Isn't it the case that endless popularity ratings mean that averages rise to the top?

Of course there are also artists, organisations, authors and, to give one example, musicians, who do quite extraordinary things but may not have many 'friends'. It is possible that I do not have the right friends to lead me to unique content.

What can be done about that?

Doesn't publishing on the internet also mean a huge change in the creative process? Because of the lack of publishers and editors, an artist or author cannot be sent back to his office, studio or drawing board. Don't initial rejection and criticism make for better creative work?

deBuren is critical and asks plenty of questions, but does not dismiss these developments. We want to know.

Everyone becomes their own medium. In this regard, one striking thing is the way politicians seem to be approaching the press less and less and are expressing their opinions on their blogs. deBuren is also increasingly becoming its own medium, since we can already broadcast. However, like almost every cultural institution, we are constantly struggling with 'the user'. We try to produce valuable content and hope to be able to share it even better in the future.

As mentioned, it is possible that a book was not the best choice for this.

Dorian van der Brempt

Sander Muilerman

Vlaams Nederlands Huis deBuren

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INTRODUCTION

Developments in mobile and online communication technology vastly changed our daily life over the past 15 years. In the early nineties the Internet was an exciting new technology reserved to only a small group of users. Today it has become embedded in all levels of society. Computers have become affordable and faster. And on top of that cheaper network connections made the World Wide Web more accessible. Authorities try to bridge the gap between those who have access to these new technologies and those who are restricted from it for diverse reasons. And despite these efforts, there will probably always be a digital divide, but one cannot ignore that the Internet has become ubiquitous, especially to the younger generation.

These changes have impact on the way people communicate, as well as on the way they exchange information and knowledge with each other. People now have immediate access to all the information they are interested in. Furthermore the developments introduce new forms of social interaction since the user switches, connects and changes easily from one source of information to another through their mobile phone, PDA and computer. As such the Web creates a living environment enabling live interaction between users. Information and knowledge thus become part of a fluid that in essence, only these users should/could control. Users adapt information while transferring it. When soliciting resources, the reader, listener, viewer may add something to the information s/he just accessed, s/he may use it in a different context and s/he may develop thoughts linked with that information and thus extend and enlarge it. This interaction keeps information fickle and up-to-date. Without users, most content would be dead or forgotten; through users it stays alive/ enters new fields of knowledge and offers new impulses to existing resources. In the current space of information and knowledge transfer it has become very difficult to define which user added or changed which aspect to a specific piece of content, especially in surroundings where joint creations are part of the process. There the user has become/is (part of) the content.

It remains to be seen over time, but one cannot ignore is that through these technological developments, new formats emerge next to the traditional ways of publishing, filming, and music making; formats that can be shared on a much larger basis than before. The speed of information exchange and the possibilities to work with others on creations, led to an explosion of creative material. Building on existing creativity is not new, people have always and everywhere (re) created existing material. But since most of it happened locally, it stayed locally and compared to the digital age, it was known by only a few people. Today, once posted on the World Wide Web, these creations are accessible by people all over the globe. This has the advantage that they can be shared on a much larger basis than before, but it also implies that these creations become easier to trace for all kinds of regulators such as 'law' and copyright. This may have impact on creativity in the end. So in order to stimulate creativity as described at the beginning of this introduction, content provided by the creative user/ Pro-Am should be able to work in an 'open structure', without gatekeepers controlling the vectors of communication and thus decide what can be seen, heard and/or read in Cyberspace.

A certain protection is needed, but it becomes problematic when it involves restrictions on access to information and knowledge. Cultural background may indeed have influence on taste, value and interest, but it becomes dangerous when a nation decides what can be read or consulted over the Internet. The creative user

and the information omnivore should be able to access the content they want. Though reality shows that this free flow of information, digital creations and knowledge is becoming less and less free, because local authorities, code, content providers and network providers more than ever control the flow.

As already mentioned by Dorian van der Brempt and Sander Muilerman, a lot of questions remain: How will this evolve? Will a more flexible copyright system come into place? And how much material will the creative user be able to use freely in the future? In what direction will hard- and software evolve and in what sense will it empower the user even more or will it lead to a number of constraints based on the velocity of data transport, the influence of local authorities and the complexness of code? And what if you are not an experienced user of the Internet wanting to find your way through the web, quality might show on the long run, but where do you start? Is there a possible role for guides/curators guiding non-expert users through the information in an open way build on trust and reputation?

Questions addressed in one way or another by 10 experts when looking - each from their field - at cyberspace in 2020: Jan Bierhoff talks about source generated content; Paul Gerhardt draws a future scenario for creativity; Dick Rijken looks at the way we address cultural heritage in 2020; Stuart Nolan concentrates on citizen players; the notes of Loïc Lemeur focuss on Television in the future; according to Clo Willaerts the Internet will eat itself; Bob Young sees the free market as a driving force for the future; John Buckman places singularity vs. blobjects; Evi Werkers reflects on copyright; and Ana Pejcinova closes the series with a plead for open access of information. The scenarios are illustrated by quotes posted on Twitter, photo's published on Flickr and impressions of the reflection on these scenarios when presented at the meeting of minds ***The User is the Content*** in Antwerp in April 2007...

but of course the reflection always continues!

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Future Scenarios

1

Source generated content: the next big thing?

JAN BIERHOFF

Fast forward to the 2020 scenario and the user is basically doing what he or she is best at: use content. Little left of the hype which tried to force innocent citizens in the communication driving seat, a media hype which echoed loudly through the second half of the first decade of the 21st century. A hollow outcry, as it turned out not much later. A good 10 years later, and the user is the proactive information consumer who also reacts, initiates, expresses views as a matter of routine, but only when there is a need or opportunity. The user refused to become the omnipotent producer and saviour of a cracking media scene, as predicted or hoped for.

Circa 2020, cyberspace is mature. It didn't turn into a vast, amorphous sphere of messages and data transfers but developed a structure consisting of a number of what one can define as 'parallel universes', each with distinct character traits, but strongly interconnected. What can the time traveller and space explorer expect to observe? At least four different 'information galaxies', that emerged out of man's quest for fulfilling, efficient and fully digital interaction patterns.

Here is the line-up:

- Alive and kicking around that time: the traditional mass media, still the prime **content mediators** of the information society;
- Exploded into action and there to stay: the Google gang, a whole range of powerful **content aggregators**;
- Then: occupying a nice niche for the proxy communication sphere: the private publishers (or professional amateurs, or citizen journalists), future's **content circulators**;
- And: the embedded publishers, the former structural media sources, around 2020 the most prominent **content generators**.

In this brief exposé, we intentionally leave out the first two categories. Many interesting stories to be told here, but, given the focus of this meeting: another time. I will make an attempt to give a bit more detail about the latter two, the private and embedded publishers.

FIGURE 1: CHANGING LEAD ROLES IN THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS



What happened to the private publishers, initially commonly depicted as content generating users? In hindsight (that is from the 2020 perspective), one has to acknowledge that the individual information consumer has been burdened with an overdose of optimism about his potential role in the communication process. Funny, the men and women concerned were never described in terms of their identity, activity or societal stature, but merely through their role as end station in the communication process: the user of other people's messages. In those exiting first days of internet interactivity, the mere fact that one could talk back was such a novelty that the actual person involved, let alone the information he or she had to convey, were not considered to be the most important feature. The user was given a sort of sacrosanct status and everyone, the professional media not excluded, had to have him in their court. It didn't matter much that the emerging practices were far less convincing than the initial idea. Little notice was taken of the darker sides of massive user-driven information delivery: defamation, distortion, irrelevant babble, spam spray. And it is fair to say that most users felt pretty uncomfortable with this attributed responsibility to react, just because they potentially could do so.

*Clusters will form
from among the content providers and
will define their own strategies*

Eventually, the matter balanced out. User input found its proper bedding in various communities, local, special interest, theme-dominated. Citizens made working coalitions with regional papers, which became more transparent and responsive. And people turned routinely into ad-hoc

reporters when fate parachuted them right in the middle of a news scene. Many blogs lost their attraction and faded out once the absence of a substantial readership became too apparent.

So, after a decade of upheaval about user input, back to business as usual for the professional communicators? Well, not exactly. Parallel to the more realistic positioning of user generated content, the former structural media sources started to take an independent and in fact far more powerful position in the digital information landscape. For centuries, they had contended with their role as providers of the raw material for communication acts, happy that someone else took care of the distribution of their facts, thoughts and intentions. In the days of physical information transport and channel scarcity, there simply was no alternative for this division of labour. The digital era though tipped the power balance dramatically. For the first

time, prime media sources such as the corporate world, governments or NGOs could go solo and increasingly did so.

Many more than individual people, organisations had and have a stake in information control. And this is exactly what the network society was empowering them with: direct contact with target groups, without interference of a mediating party. Hence, circa 2010, 'source generated content' increasingly became a dominant 'information universe' in cyberspace.

In order to not make the same mistake as the case with the abstract and rather ideological reference to 'user generated content', we should leave the phrase 'source generated content' quickly and change it for the activity-oriented term 'embedded publishers'. The main characteristic of this category is the fact that (electronic) publishing is not (and never will be) their core business but rather an instrumental add-on to better achieve their prime organisational goal, whatever that may be. For many concrete societal parties and structural media sources, this applies. In this context, I will mention four application domains.

Let's first have a look at the political domain. With the roll-out of broadband networks, governments choose, or were forced to seriously consider the e-factor and introduce electronic procurement and variations of e-government. The whole set-up was first of all designed to digitise relevant transactions, services for citizens, but soon it is understood that this is only possible with a guiding digital information policy. Governments, and politicians for that matter, then become major embedded publishers. First in a rather amateurish way, but fast enough on a professional basis: the stakes are high. Politicians use personal blogs for profile building (and damage control), and the press starts to use these statements as a basis for news. Most e-gov websites evolve from electronic billboards to versatile, user-friendly and interactive information repositories. Talking, dealing, cooperating with or rallying against government at all levels takes place in the digital arena.



The information society has equally influenced the corporate world. Businesses traditionally were hardly ever an open book for the media, but certainly when the communication infrastructure was there to mastermind the information streams themselves, this became increasingly the default commercial position. Consumers could be served at a much better basis. Instead of bombarding them with general advertisements, the web offered ample opportunities for a tailored, personalised sales pitch, and ultimately a better service. Cutting out the middleman became a favourite past-time for the managerial elite. Direct marketing, direct sales, direct feedbacks, the economic value chain shortened, changed direction, speeded up and altered doing business for good. No additional media party required.

The picture is less consistent for the myriad of organisations which belong to the civil society, but also at this level many parties have seized the initiative and became embedded publishers.

Unions, grass roots initiatives, NGOs, universities, sport clubs, they all noticed the advantages of directing information processes themselves. Certainly for this category, media were always an uncertain ally, sometimes completely ignoring and thus effectively cutting them off from the public domain, then stereotyping their objectives and/or actions. And attention could be temporarily, one-sided or biased towards the unfamiliar and exotic aspects. Better build direct links with the membership, clients, students, and supporters. This was one of the reasons for major soccer clubs to start their own TV-channels, for aid organisations to negotiate sponsored airtime, for action groups to build their public image around a virtual presence and meeting ground in social software spaces such as Second Life.

*Transactions need to be combined
with communication actions*

A last category of embedded publishers to be mentioned in this context are the experts who incorporate much of our in-depth understanding concerning a range of subjects, disciplines and themes. Again, for times haphazardly present in the traditional media, and often far from happy with the way their expertise is brought in. Via Internet usergroups and online forums, they were the first to recognise and exploit the full potential of electronic contact, and subsequently also became the frontrunners in the development of digital self-publishing formats. The vast majority of experts have an organisational affiliation, and for that reason should not be portrayed as an individual publisher or incidental blogger, certainly when they start operating as a collective or group, which is often the case. These intellectual powerhouses easily develop an authoritative voice and have high visibility in the cyberworld. Hence the number of cooperation structures with the incumbent media.

I used the metaphor of the parallel universes for the digital content producers briefly outlined here. Parallel, but not separate. In fact, in the run-up to the 2020 benchmark, one notices growing connections between the various spheres. Most of the time, for the benefit of all parties concerned: originators, mediators and users. Two intertwining galaxies are those of the traditional media and the novel proactive readers/viewers, and furthermore the strategic alliances between the content aggregators and embedded publishers. After the initial scimmages between the various blocks, the notion of combined information delivery quickly became more convincing, and popular. That scenario though still has to be written.

EXCERPT FROM THE REFLECTION ON JAN BIERHOFF'S PRESENTATION

Paul Gerhardt: *I liked your typology of embedded publishers. And I'd like to add another category. Museums, galleries and archives will directly want to share and broadcast their content tot the public.*

Jan Bierhoff: *Indeed they at least need to be mentioned. Not only museums, also libraries are an interesting case. Many librarians don't see the point to continue physically collecting books. They see themselves as the information manager of the future, because they have an established customer base. They know every individual person who goes to a library. They haven't been capitalizing on that social capital, but in the future they will and thus play an important part in the way content is distributed.*



2

A scenario for creativity in 2020

DR. PAUL GERHARDT

The BBC's Creative Archive project is founded on the assumption that we can unlock the power of moving images for mass communication; in the same way that printing unlocked the power of the text.

Six hundred years ago the readers of early books faced similar restrictions to contemporary consumers of broadcasting. Books were scarce, valuable, often chained to library shelves and they forced the consumer to make an "appointment to read". The broadcasting of moving images today enforces the same rationing.

*The education system
is still based on literacy,
but people are already using
other means.*

But while it took hundreds of years for printing to liberate the text, the mass distribution moving images could happen within a decade.

Before the invention of text, very little stood between human thought and its communication. Verbal communication probably embraced direct and descriptive imagery accompanied by physical gestures and demonstration.

The written word changed all that. Although it allowed men and women to communicate over distance, it also forced them to codify their ideas within a language that would work on the page or the tablet. At the same time, a large proportion of people were excluded because they could not understand the code.

Distribution problems were overcome by printing. Eventually, text and printing developed many forms and – through mass literacy – reached the majority in industrialized countries. Today, we use text in a highly fluid and flexible way – from the doctoral thesis on the one hand to "txt" on a mobile phone on the other. And to accompany this we have developed a mass publishing and distribution system, with its own complex copyright arrangements.

When we walk through a town centre today we can decide how, when and under what legal conditions we wish to consume text. For instance, we can choose to visit a bookshop and buy a new, quality publication. Or we may select a paperback edition, forgoing the quality of the print. Or we may go to a second hand

bookshop and buy the same book at a fraction of the price. Or we may visit the public library and borrow the book for free. We may even decide that we just want a particular chapter, or verse of poetry, and go straight to the photocopier.

Each of these forms meets a particular personal or business need. On the whole, we are comfortable with our understanding of this legal framework. No one is going to complain if we sell on our book, or even give it away to friends or family. Even photocopies of photocopies are acceptable ways to distribute meaningful text.

In other words, we have evolved a distribution and intellectual property framework that ensures that the printed word is at the service of human communication. The new task is to apply a similar framework to still and moving images.

The Internet has provided us with an unprecedented opportunity to assemble on our desktops all the tools we need to extend our communication skills: audio, music, text, still pictures and moving images. If we want to describe how it feels to struggle with a major illness we can reach for pictures or a clip from a TV documentary that expresses those feelings more powerfully than any words we can find. If we are compiling a family history we can go beyond the faded snapshots of former generations and show, from local archives, what our city or street looked like fifty years ago. Or an amateur archaeologist can assemble his timeline of the history of Roman Britain and accompany it with extracts from TV and radio documentaries revealing archaeological digs at key sites.

*Between thought and communication,
text has been fundamental.
After that, we got pictures,
music and moving images.*



All this may be possible, but it is currently severely limited by the availability of moving image content and by the legal structures that confine it. Therefore, we need to evolve our “town centre” for moving images: the equivalent of our new and second-hand shops, our photocopies and our public libraries.

Unquestionably this landscape will be built, but the speed at which it develops is dependent on how quickly archives and broadcasters wake up to the new mass communication needs.

It will have profound implications for how we treat literacy, creativity and copyright. The new literacy will no longer be text based. It will encompass all the skills we need to embrace the new

communication opportunities. The next generation will want to be as familiar with video editing techniques and music sampling as with sentence construction.

Their output will stretch our definition of creativity. We will no longer be able to reserve this term for the work of the specially gifted. Instead, we will need to recognise that with this palette of tools in the hands of the majority, there will be an opportunity for many to generate work of quality. This is already happening with online photography, where professionals recognise that every one or two pictures in a hundred posted by amateur photographers could be of value.

Finally, we will need to make major adjustments to the management of intellectual property. Rights holders may find this initially threatening, but it means no more than the management of rights in images developing in the same direction as that for rights in text. Public access to moving images, and a public right to use them in self-expression, learning and communication, is not a denial of the right of ownership. We simply have to recognise that by encouraging a mass market in moving images we will generate new revenue streams for rights owners.

*When talking about UGC,
we are talking of the birth of a new thing.
We will not know how it will evolve:
Cinema started as one portable camera
who filmed everyone going in and out
of a football game
and then charging for screening.*

3

Hippies 2.0 in museum 2.0

DICK RIJKEN

It is the year 2020, a crucial period in the history of western civilization. The post-war baby boomers, once love and peace seeking hippies, are all retired, and more active now than ever. But what does that mean?

HIPPIES

They formulated their dreams in the sixties. They tried to make them real in the seventies. They got frustrated in the eighties when it all fell apart. They felt alienated in the nineties, but gathered tremendous material wealth as their careers progressed. They slowly got used to the digital life in the early years of the new millennium, as they learnt from their offspring. And, finally, they got it. In fact, they took over, as they became the perfect amateurs. They're well educated, articulate, critical, wealthy, and, now, they're retired. But not bored. Coming from an era where 'quality', 'meaning', 'substance' and 'depth' were important values, they express themselves and reflect on the world around them. Big time!

WEB 2.0

First, they despised it. Hated it because the central idea of Web 2.0 - everyone can produce content - was the worst idea they had ever heard. Until they realized that 'everyone' could include them as well. So they learnt to work the web. And they love it.

*Amateur vs Professional
means "Loving it"
vs "Get Payed for it".*

AMATEURS

Because they love it, they are amateurs ('amare': to love). They don't get paid (they don't need the money), but they do what needs to be done (they do need the challenge) in what is now an everlasting Summer of Love 2.0. In their eyes, 'professionals' are losers who will only work when someone else pays them, thus sacrificing sacred independence. Not them. No one tells them what to do. Never.

HIPPIES 2.0

While younger generations spend their time chatting about nothing in particular and collecting unknown friends, hippies 2.0 are generating high quality content on a mind-boggling scale. They have time, they are independent, and they won't take 'no' for an answer. With their old-school, quality-driven, truth-still-exists mentality, they are producing content vigorously. Younger generations of journalists, photogra-

phers, video editors, and curators... who needs them? Well, Hippies 2.0 needed them. As teachers, coaches, and mentors. To show them how it's done, to help them do it. To make them 'experienced' (finally)...

A NEW INDUSTRY

All this was the driving force behind what we now call the 'creducation industry', a potent blend of ICT, art and design, and education. Smart entrepreneurs were keen on providing Hippies 2.0 with tools, knowledge, and skills to work the web and create content-in a pursuit of truth that younger generations never took very seriously, but it was and still is good money, easily earned...



A 'creducation' sector will come forth: Creativity and Education resulting in a society of inspiration.

HISTORY 2.0

With old age came historical awareness-at some point, you realize that your own life has more history than future. In the sixties, they wanted a better future, but now they're aiming for a better past. So they directed their love at history, at our archives and museums-to backup, illustrate and justify their opinions, stories, and analyses. History is a powerful mechanism for meaning. This was their last chance, and they took it.

MUSEUM 2.0

It was the end of the museum as we knew it. All the knowledge in all the museums of all the professional curators was not enough. Hippies 2.0 knew better (old habits die hard). In Holland and in Belgium, we gathered all the objects of all the museums and stored them

all in one single location-a huge skyscraper depot in a newly developed 'polder' in the Netherlands. Fully automated, climate controlled, and publicly available for loans and presentations. Lucky curators managed to find new jobs at universities in art history departments, suggesting acquisitions every now and then. All the old museum buildings are now empty exhibition spaces that can be used by the public to create exhibitions. Intricate voting systems with mechanisms for dealing with reputation and trust determine who gets to exhibit where and who pays for it all. And the objects? They illustrate stories, they help materialize the truths about the past of Hippies 2.0-'Like the online story? Check out the reality behind at a museum near you!'

YOUNGER GENERATIONS 2.0

Younger generations now have more stories about the past than ever before, more interpretations, more vigorously documented truths about the past than they can ever consume. Hippies 2.0, with all their indi-

vidual quests for truth now all presented in Web 2.0, have created the penultimate post-modern universe of interpretations where truth evaporates in a purple haze of interpretations. It's now up to younger generations to mix it all up and make sense of the future. There are rumors that World Peace is in the making. Long live the children of the revolution!

EXCERPT FROM THE REFLECTION ON DICK RIJKEN'S PRESENTATION

Paul Gerhardt: *To reorganise cultural artefacts virtually is great, there are so many things you can do. There are so many journeys possible. But to mess around with the existing physical placement of objects is entirely another issue. Because the reason different institutions exist and house different objects is part of the history of how those objects have been collected. Therefore one cannot apply the same methods to the virtual and the real world.*

Dick Rijken: *The whole process of reflection on our history resulting in what objects should be kept for eternity, I would rather see that in Universities – in Art History Departments, where there is much more of that knowledge. I know many museums with one or two curators. Then they die or retire and nobody knows why the collection is as it is, which interrupts cultural continuity, and here the model of bringing small collections together physically and virtually might help in the future. My model combines the two.*

Dorian van der Brempt: *Indeed the fact of presenting, moving and insuring works of art becomes impossible and on top of that when you decide to go and see for instance the Mona Lisa at the Louvre you know you will not be able to see it in ideal circumstances. The ideal way of looking at a piece of art will change also and has changed through technology. I believe that in this century museums will become partly virtual. You will be able to make perfect exhibitions on the Net, that you will never be able to arrange in real life.*



4

Citizen Players vs. Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy

STUART NOLAN

In 2020 cyberspace will continue to be a place for play. I'd like to discuss the tension between positive and negative play and how this relates to citizenship. I refer to three of the greatest works of predictive fiction to illustrate my pessimistic view.

"The Director and his students stood for a short time watching a game of Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy. Twenty children were grouped in a circle round a chrome steel tower. A ball thrown up so as to land on the platform at the top of the tower rolled down into the interior, fell on a rapidly revolving disk, was hurled through one or other of the numerous apertures pierced in the cylindrical casing, and had to be caught." Brave New World, Aldous Huxley

The game of Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy is invented, in part, to keep the machines of industry moving. Throwing a ball to each other is just as much fun but does not need manufacturing. The game is important as a form of social control. To quote Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*

"Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy. As Huxley remarked in Brave New World Revisited, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny 'failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions'. In 1984, Huxley added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In Brave New World, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure."

Commentators such as Lawrence Lessig recognise that the Internet is a contested space that must be actively defended from those who wish to control and own it. The Orwellian fear of a captured Internet is real and the coming years will see this battle intensify as the second billion arrive in cyberspace and we face what Ethan Zuckerman has referred to as the problem of the Internets. I will return to this.

In contrast, Huxley's dystopian vision sees the people being distracted by interactive media (the feelies), sex (the Internet), and games. All brought together in the Hot Coffee mod of *Grand Theft Auto*. Huxley could not have imagined a Bumble-Puppy as elaborate as *GTA* let alone *Second Life*.

*Is the technology
that would be uniting us,
dividing us?*

But Huxley's dystopia is still a world of inflicted pleasures. What happens when we generate our own pleasures?

I have mentioned both 1984 and Brave New World. My third classic of predictive fiction is the Judge Dredd stories in the comic 2000AD. In one issue of 2000AD Mega City One has passed a law making all pointless hobbies illegal. Judge Dredd arrests a man who has spent the last 15 years trying to headbutt an



egg, dropped from an elaborate mechanism, into a bucket of sand without breaking it. It is a crime because all citizens are required to actively contribute to society and not to distract themselves with useless pleasures. One look at the present cyberspace is enough to feel a little sympathy for Judge Dredd's position. And as we look forward to 2020 it is possible to see this thread of useless, distracting hobbies becoming a real issue for those of us who are concerned about the level of political engagement in West. It has been said that the reason that the UK has never had a successful political revolution is that there is a flaw in our national character that can be summarized with one word: trainspotting. I fear that this is becoming a cultural trait of cyberspace.

It is easy to see the problem of those who wish to control the Internet though it is not easy to actually fight them. The problem of the Internet as a Bumble-Puppy is harder to see.

So my pessimistic view of 2020 cyberspace is of a space of dumb distractions, mindless chatter, petty bickering, divided energies.

My optimistic view? Let me begin with a critique of the phrase User Generated Content - is a term that reveals more about the incumbent media organizations and those who wish to monetize the creative work of others than it does about the people who make the stuff that it refers to.

I have always disliked the term content when applied to media. It strips creative work of all its emotion, energy and subtlety. A film-maker does not feel that she is generating content - like some kind of factory robot. Neither does she feel like a user - a junkie factory robot perhaps?

People Make Stuff. They always have done. This clarifies the issue for me. What kind of stuff will people be making in 2020 and what does it mean for citizenship.

The second billion internet users will have less in common with each other than the first billion.

Although recent MORI polls suggest that 32% of the UK population still know nothing about climate change and there has been little significant lifestyle change trend forecasters as diverse as Marian Saltzman, Rohit Talwar and Faith Popcorn all predict rises in environmental concern, conscientious consumption and moral

status anxiety. This trend will favor the locally made over the mass manufactured and I suggest it will influence how we build 2020 cyberspace.

Paul Harris of The Guardian describes The Arcade Fire as a band who were shaped in the innocent 1990 when people talked of the end of history. But then came 9/11, the war on terror and climate change. Their music expresses this climate of angst and the same concerns are palpable in cyberspace. Threaded between the song-mimes of YouTube and the glitter outfits of MySpace are similar serious concerns about terror, war, imperialism and the environment.

This increased seriousness is picked up in the UK by Gordon Brown in this way,

"I think we're moving from this period when, if you like, celebrity matters, when people have become famous for being famous. I think you can see that in other countries too - people are moving away from that to what lies behind the character and the personality... People are wanting the concerns that they have discussed in a rounded way. So I'm not sure that the public are in love with trivia."

David Milliband, a possible candidate for Labour leadership in the UK outlines his new political vision,

"The 1950s were the "I need" era when people required state help with housing, education and health. Then came the 1980s, the "I want era" when everyone yearned for material wealth. Today we are in the "I can" era, where government and the people - liberated and better informed by new technology yet still wanting the reassurance of involvement in community causes - can and must work together to solve the challenges of a chaotic world.... The notion that the country that succeeds will be the country of players not spectators is a very powerful notion. The audience has gone to the stage."

*If you look at modern society,
you can't help but feel
sympathy for Judge Dredd
who had to arrest people
with useless hobbies .*

This is a seductive view. People would no longer be spectators of government but players in it. We can note how a similar recognition of the urge to participate meaningfully in the polis as an independent player occurs in Autonomist writers Paolo Virno and Antonio Negri and whose concept of the multitude is particularly relevant to a political imagining of cyberspace in 2020.

The multitude is seen as composed of autonomous individuals who, despite differing cultures, views and political stances, are both willing and able to come together to

struggle for its shared goals or against its shared enemies.

By 2020, should we maintain the free use of the Internet, we will certainly have the technological ability to allow the multitude to share concepts about its goals and its enemies. I use the word concepts rather than information because we will have moved beyond a passive swapping of information and will be exchanging something far more powerful - professionally-realized, broadcast-standard stories. These will not just be the work of tech-savvy individual. We have begun to see decision markets applied not just to the rating of media but to the making of media.

A Swarm of Angels is an open source film project, whose aim is to make the world's first Internet-funded, crewed and distributed feature film. The crowdsourcing project aims to attract 50,000 individual subscribers each contributing £25 to the production.

We will have the ability to come together on political issues and the wisdom of the crowd suggests that given autonomy, communication, and decentralization we could be making good decisions by 2020. But will we have the will to overcome our differences?

To return to Zuckerman's problem of the Internets: We now have more than a billion people online but the idea that we all work and play on a common global internet is an illusion. As Zuckerman says,

"The web is becoming ever more fragmented, and international borders are increasingly visible online. More and more web pages are appearing in languages other than English. China has more than 130 million Internet users and is starting to play by its own rules. Soon to follow are the Middle East, India, Russia and Brazil. Is the technology that we thought was uniting us really dividing us?"

*Interesting project:
A Swarm of Angels. You
can call it Cinema 2.0.*

By 2020 the mix of Internet cultures will mean that the stories we tell are more likely to offend one group or another. Frank Furedi has said that a true community is somewhere that it is difficult to leave. The practically infinite size of cyberspace makes it easy to opt-out of a community and build another.

Either the Internets will segment out and have little to do with each other, reflecting the issues of multiculturalism, integration and citizenship seen by European nation states facing mass migration of workforces, or we find ways to build bridges between online communities and some of the ideals of the multitude are realized.

The eTwinning project uses the Internet to run projects between schools in Europe highlighting the experience of working with other cultures for children. By 2020 we may be eTwinning between the Internets in order to foster multicultural understanding.

It has been suggested that play is intrinsically ethical as it requires the ability to creatively imagine how others perceive you. Such ethical play will necessary to if we are to be player citizens both in Milliband's national sense and as citizens of the Internets.

Pat Kane, author of *The Play Ethic*, suggests the metaphor of a well-constructed playground for player citizens of the future. The challenge for 2020 is to build such a playground without being distracted by bumble-puppies.

5 T.V. 2.0

LOÏC LE MEUR

NOTES

WHY TV SUCKS TODAY:

- impossible to choose what you are watching except switching channels
- when you want to watch a show, impossible to choose when you watch it in general impossible to choose by the popularity of a show, only by what the TV editor decided is important
- have to watch advertising, totally untargeted
- copyright disables sharing
- too far from reality (often fake public, fake content, etc) current TV is wonderland reality -not targeted
- no archives
- not searchable
- not community driven

WHAT WILL CHANGE WITH TV AND USER GENERATED CONTENT?

- there are thousands of very talented people on niches that are unknown by traditional TV: bloggers, artists, etc. The best amateurs will be the authors of News 2.0
- the editor becomes the user by suggesting, filtering and deciding about the news in the show
- the selected show items can also be user generated content
- interactive feedback permanent (voting, chat, etc)
- very low production, sales and distribution costs, entirely web based
- ubiquity with amateur, low cost professional reporters and studios around the world
- content based on self production but also production on editing bits of the existing videos on the most popular networks (Youtube, dailymotion etc)
- mobile
- more reactive (amateurs everywhere, faster than sending reporters)
- can be done from anywhere using skypecasts, video conference etc

HOW THE NEWS WILL BE CREATED ?

- crowd sourcing and filtering
- digg like techmemes, search engines etc...
- permanent feedback on everything
- crowd editing

*Perhaps once
we'll have links
on video, giving
a more extensive
version when you
click on a fragment
of a short newscast.*

WHAT WILL BE THE FORMAT ?

- live (Joost, ustream.tv), downloaded (Apple TV)
- no schedule anymore, no 8PM news -100 000s of “channels”
- long and short versions
- all archived
- fake or reality ?
- community driven & niche: wow, kids, treonants
- hyperlinking within the videos, getting access to more details etc

UNEXPECTED FORMATS

- live realityTV (Justin.tv)
- the twitter of video blogging
- Google glasses :)

WHO WILL PRODUCE ?

- millions of videos available
- thousands of people able to edit & select the best content
- Creative commons sharing & mixing

REVENUES ?

- Advertising 2.0: video adsense, word of mouth based
- messages people want & when they want it
- product placement

*Why TV sucks.
You get pre-defined
content on a moment
that has been chosen
for you, it's too far
from reality,
you can't share.*

EXCERPT FROM THE REFLECTION ON LOÏC LE MEUR'S PRESENTATION

Bettina Geysen: *Why do you think TV shouldn't be fake? TV should be interesting and entertaining so an interesting question should be asked in the studio and expressed in a good way, so I do not see a problem with preset questions. Anyway once you start editing raw footage, it is not real anymore.*

Loïc Le Meur: *But at least the raw footage is real. When it is a movie it is obvious that it is fake, but I feel cheated upon when news or an informative topic is involved. Being fake or working with interesting material is not the problem; not knowing is. People should at least know the setting, because it influences the way they look at what is broadcasted.*



6

Internet will eat itself

CLO WILLAERTS

NOTES

In 2020, the browser as we know it today is no longer used. The old www is still around somewhere, but is mainly used as an archive of early 21st century popular culture.

It must have been around 2010 when internet users started to realize that the common internet protocols were slowly suffocating the medium itself.

VIDEO KILLED THE INTERNET STAR

The marketing fad called “web 2.0” made hosted applications immensely popular. Video over IP suddenly boomed – YouTube was everybody’s darling. But nobody looked at the “http” in front of everything they did. Hypertext Transfer Protocol – hence, not fit for transport of continuous data streams, like music or videos. Web video was choking the pipes, no matter how much bandwidth was till available. Out of the growing popularity of WiFi networks, a new kind of web was born.

NEW PROTOCOLS BUT NO STANDARDS

Nobody knows which protocols really are used to make up the new web. Some of them use a new type of satellite uplinks; others rely on a mesh of peer-to-peer WiFi-like networks. And that’s ok, because both the users and the flashy portable devices they use are completely technology unaware.

PORTABLE DEVICES

These portable devices vary in screen size, design, some of them even have virtual keyboards. They all use a wide range of different connectivity protocols, and simply “sniff” if they can connect or not. Usually with other devices like them, sometimes with local hubs, in rare cases even with servers. The only downside of these devices is that they have a short lifespan, still struggle with battery problems, and are rather expensive.

IMMERSIVE CONNECTIVITY

Even during flights or while travelling by train, web users and their devices keep sniffing for connectivity. Since it’s wireless and largely invisible, some call it “connectivity clouds” that surround users and their devices. For the users, this connectivity is always free. In most cases though, it’s the manufacturers of

*Now the amateurs
are taking the pro’s
out of their comfortzone.
Low quality pictures
can seem “more true”.*

portable devices and related hardware that funds the connectivity networks. Competition on the hardware market is fierce, so adding access to the “clouds” to their buyers is a price they are willing to pay.

PRESENCE AND IDENTITY

But once connected, what do these web users communicate about? Basically the same things people love to talk about, even before technology was there to make it easier for them to do so. Teenagers want to find out who they are and what they want to become – so connecting with their friends and peers is really important. And for the boys: dating with girls, of course. The older generations basically still do the same, but often mix communication in the context of their job with more personal interest.

In the end, all of the messages they send across boil down to the same questions:

- Where are you?
- I am at x, do you want to come over?
- Where is y now?
- Where will you be going this weekend?

MOOD ADVERTISING

Broadcasting and narrowcasting where you are and why has never been so popular. It’s connected to their mood, and even to their identity. At marketing history classes you’d hear how advertising used to be targeted at certain demographics: the thirty-something housewives, the double-income-no-kids, the yuppies. Nowadays advertising tries to catch the mood the consumer is in, in an attempt to influence it, or to use it to have them make buying decisions. Depending on where she is and when, a thirty-something woman can be a lover, a mother, a manager, a friend. Or just plain bored. Imagine how hard advertising would be if the web users wouldn’t communicate about their mood so much.

*Advertising
will be targeted
on the mood
of the user.*

URBAN NOMADS

They don’t particularly like being called “urban nomads”, since it was a term coined by marketing professionals and advertisers. But there is a large group of “web natives” who love to move around. Literally. Some of them laugh at the old image of web users as “geeks” or “nerds” who would hardly ever come out. The “urban nomads” travel all the time: kids between their parents, who live in separate towns. Students from their home to school and back. Professionals between work and their “third place” – the gym, a bar, a friend’s house.

SYNCING

They carry their portable devices with them, like they used to with key chains, wallets or mobile phones. When they are “in between clouds”, they record messages or edit them. As soon as they get connected, their devices sync with others so the messages and data are distributed. Syncing has replaced the old peer-to-peer networks and is very popular. Only for real-time communication, like voice or video calls, the “nomads” will

*A group called The Analogs
will grow popular.*

*They live without any
connectivity and are
proud of it.*

deliberately look for a place with good (preferably free) wireless connectivity. Since these places come and go, communicating about “good clouds” takes up a large part of their conversations.

THE ANALOGS

But not everyone is so obsessed over connectivity, or sports flashy portable devices. There’s an influential lobby group called “the Analogs” who gave up somewhere between the Chapter 11 of Apple Computers and the exposure of the terrorist web. The Analogs promote a web-less life, and are proud of being able to live, work and play without ever going online. They make efforts not to leave trail of personal data or behavioural patterns behind, regardless of the benefits they might get from it.

THE GREEN LOBBY

Their political influence is growing, and they get the support of the Green Lobby: the powerful organization that started off with small grassroots events like Earth Day in early 21st century, but that eventually becomes the largest consortium of politicians, media and industry.

The most well-known paleo-futurist of the twenties, Clo Willaerts, is the first to predict how the old visions of an internet-rich future were wrong: the Web Era will only last for 60 years or so. After that, it will have killed itself by being too ambitious, too intrusive, too loud.



7

The free market as a driving force for the future

Transcript of the presentation by **BOB YOUNG**,
CEO Lulu.com; edited by Ann Laenen

At Red Hat, Marc Ewing and I funded a non-profit centre, because we were worried about open source and we were asking ourselves what we could do to contribute back to this huge open source community who had helped Red Hat become so successful. The problem was that every open source project you could name was getting funded at the time, so we could not just do more software. Therefore we did the reverse analysis. If open source fails why will it fail? And our take on it was because our governments, whether they are in Brussels, Washington or Tokyo or anywhere else, had come to equate intellectual property with the health of their technology industry. If a little bit of intellectual property protection created the technology industry, a lot of intellectual property protection must be able to create an even bigger technology industry. For any of us working in the technology field that is pretty clueless. The analysis I use is that of vitamin D. If you don't get vitamin D you get bone deceases. If you get to many you die. So it is not

*The legal system is
an open source market.*

*Every argument
a lawyer uses can
and will be used
by others, just like that.*

that vitamin D is good or bad, it's that too much of anything will kill you, and too much of intellectual property rules as far as I'm concerned will start killing you if you start looking at total control. Thus government has a huge role to play. And a role, I don't think the market will ever serve properly, much as there are large for-profit educational institutions; is education. And so when I think of the Internet, I know for a fact that it is going to be market factors and education driving the future of the Internet. Our society has to become increasingly well educated if they are going to answer any of the questions put up here this afternoon and yet the free market does not do most of the education well.

Let me illustrate this. Take Sunny Bono, the guy who wrote my favourite song *I got you babe*, when he retires from music making, he goes into politics and moves up the political chain. He goes to Washington DC as a congressman, and everyone sort of assumed that he was going there because he had nothing better to do



*In a free democracy,
there shouldn't be
an editor deciding
what gets to the marketplace.
The marketplace
should do that itself.*

and that it was a way of keeping himself busy in his retirement. The reality was, Sonny Bono had a mission, and his mission was to make copyright permanent. So copyright had gone from whatever 20 years at the end of the Second World War to a hundred years today in the US. And Sonny Bono wanted it permanent, his thesis being that he should be able to give *I got You Babe* to his kids who should give it to their kids ad infinitum. A carpenter can give his chair to his kids, who can give him to their kids. What Sonny didn't see was that you

couldn't give the idea of a chair to your kids and they to their kids ad infinitum. A song is an idea, it exists in our heads, it does not exist in real time, and thus it can't be given away.

This kind of conference is nonetheless hugely valuable because it tries to balance between what we need to work as entrepreneurs in a free market and the Intellectual Property Protections or Copyright Protections that allow the BBC to put half a million pounds into a show, and with a modest chance that they may have a modest return on their investment before the Bittorent guys spread it around the world. We got to protect the ability of producers of content to make money on their content, but copyright at hundred years doesn't make sense. The original copyright was of course to protect Charles Dickens for seven or fourteen years. Now in fact the way copyright rules are written in the US, you now get copyright if you are an individual for your lifetime plus 50 years, whereas the original concept to copyright was a social agreement between Dickens and the British public. He got protection for a couple of years and then his story fell into the public domain. That was the understanding. Copyright today in the US gives you a 50-year incentive to write the next song 50 years after your death. That is the whole problem, it is the reason I support creative commons. What protections the producers need in order to profit from their content so that they will make the investment versus what we as a society need so that we can educate the next generation of Sonny Bono's.

An example is the inspiration of Lulu. The recording industry of America started to sue their customers. It took Steve Jobs to invent iTunes to actually solve the problem. And suddenly you had a business. And that is the attraction to free markets. What they will do is they will get people inventing the right solutions. But it is hard work. Free markets don't work by themselves. They work within a structure. Think of it as a football game.

Is business just a game? There is actually a real parallel with games, which is, if there is not a set of rules you can't play football. You need the same rules in order to allow a free market to work properly. So when you see free markets not working properly, it is seldom the problem that free markets don't work, it is the problem that the set of rules that the government in the jurisdiction you are looking at they haven't got the rules right. And on intellectual property I do not think we have the rules right, but don't kid yourself that the future of the Internet is going to be defined by altruism or by some great invention. It is going to be driven by the Google's, and the Yahoo's and the guys who generate all this money and the venture capitalist who are funding the next generation of Google's and Yahoo's and that is why discussions of economics are so important, because the economics will determine what we will work on next.

*Open Source, iTunes, ...
People are inventing
solutions that would
otherwise be taken to
the justice department.*



8

Ray Kurzweil vs Bruce Sterling or The Singularity vs Blobjects

Transcript of the future scenario by **JOHN BUCKMAN**,
CEO Magnatune, BookMooch and board member of Creative Commons;
edited by Ann Laenen.

What I want to talk about is, what the future looks like. William Gibson's quote: "The future is already here. It's just not very evenly distributed" makes a very good point. If you want to know what the future looks like. Look around today, at things that exist today, which are trending and very distributed.

Among the techno-elite in America the Ray Kurzweil scenario is generally what most of the technical people subscribe to. Another scenario that is related to by a different camp is based on Bruce Sterling's Futurist Writings. A way of thinking of both camps is the singularity, which is Ray Kurzweil's vision, vs blobjects, Bruce Sterling's view. So I am just going to articulate these two main technical scenarios and then bring it back to the Internet.

*Massive traumatic change
is just around the corner*

Starting with Ray Kurzweil's model. If you look at the pace of major chaotic changes in the history of human existence, you see that massive changes are occurring in a much faster way. So what this says is really talking at 2020 is completely nonsensical because the pace of chaotic change is increasing so rapidly.

Think for a second, just a few years ago when it took a brand new company to go huge like an eBay, it took several years. Then there was Skype, and then there is Flickr and then the things that have been happening lately. Now we are talking on a 6 months compressed stage, where it takes 6 months for 2/3 of the Internet to use the website. So the pace at which a brand innovation goes through the entire Internet is very short. It



is 6 months now, probably in 3 years it will be under a month. So what does that mean for the future?

The singularity is this in reverse. The pace of technological change is accelerating so drastically, that if you take a curve of change that does this at some point it goes vertical. And when it goes vertical, that means as much change happened this week, has happened in all human history previous. This is a scenario, which sounds far fetched, but the evidence is pretty strong and the question is, if that is not going to happen what is it that happens around here, that makes it not happen.

To sci-fi novelist and futurist Bruce Sterling the future looks like a furby. What I mean by that is that a furby is a cute packaged little polytechnical robot that does nothing useful.

In fact it is mostly just annoying, and it is in no ways superior to a stuffed animal. It is just very complicated.

He thinks that the whole future is going to look like a

furby So it will pick up a pen and talk to you and say: O that feels good! It will just get cuter, smaller and cheaper, but not more useful. And the reason is, we cannot, as human beings, manage complexity very well. That is the point that he makes here. Certainly on the Internet all the complicated fancy things that keep coming out every few years, they all fail. What happens is, that all simple things like RSS (Real Simple Syndication), Simple mail transport protocol, these are new technologies that you can describe in a page often in an elevator. So we just don't know how to build complicated and that is Bruce Sterling's point. We might get more and more stuff piled on, all it's going to do is get more and more crappy stuff like furbies everywhere and our lives will just get messier and not any better or different in a really significant way. And the reason is we are not that smart. Even the smartest in this room, the delta between us and the dumbest person is not enough to go to the next level to solve really tough problems which is actually Kurzweil's main point. Because if you go back here to his chart, experts disagree on what the competition power will be needed to.

*I don't know any
commercial platform
that can offer
what BitTorrent can*

Thus the semantic web will never happen, because we cannot manage complexity standardisation on a global level. Micro-formats, which are ad hoc thrown together stuff that require not a lot of thinking, might happen, but the Internet will always be broken, and that for a really good reason. It will always be failing and always be barely together and that is because chaos produces the best innovation. It is what works the best so far. It will always be lawless and one of the reasons is we still don't have nations. We all thought nations

would go away in 1999, but I think we are a little naïve about that. Nations are definitely reassuring themselves and determining what their preposition is and as long as we have nations we have bodies of laws that operate outside your body of law.

*The semantic web
will never happen.*

*The internet will
always be broken.*

*It will also be
lawless.*

I think Kurzweil is really right about a very fundamental thing, which is that every year or two we are seeing major, traumatic, horrible change and in the next ten years there is really no reason not to look at change on the scale of WW2 occurring. Things that we had completely assumed would stay the same should change. I cannot forecast them for you, all I can tell you is the curve is doing this, which means that when you are here you have no idea how it is going to look like here. Just know that we are going to have horrible traumatic change. Take one really stupid example: Skype. No-one seems to make a big stink about. It means that long distance companies are gone. It also means that large numbers of governments that exist of the taxing of long distance fees are gone. That tax-base

is gone. That is suddenly a very traumatic thing that means literally that governments see one third of their tax-base go away because of Skype and they cannot do anything about it. That is going to have a bigger impact than free calls. It impacts the way governments operate and we should assume that this will keep happening.

We will also see this whole sphere of open production continue to just accelerate and go nuts. I did not bring the creative commons charts with me but they follow the same sort of trend when you go back two years a 100.000 produced, one year 2.000.000, now we are 40.000.000 pieces of licensed content we will be at a billion in a few years; thus a massive amount of production in the open.

What is interesting is peer to peer traumatises everything. BookMooch, which I run, is a person to person book exchange, means that on the Internet people can exchange books with each other, they just shift to each other, they don't need centralised warehousing and collection anymore. They don't need big companies anymore. And this idea works with any media product, it works for CD's, DVD's, software and games. Anything that you use, consume, you can pass on to somebody else. You just need software to help that happen. That means very traumatic change in what we think of as big company economies.

Also in a world of piracy, it looks like today there are no business models selling to consumers. Piracy is just too good. Yet another example, a stupid one, but no one has done this yet. You can with your neighbours pull together pull together your Internet connections pay less on common and have better service. Why does everyone in your neighbourhood has to have a direct connection to your ISP, it just does not make sense. That is a really radical thing to do to ISP's but that means that any company that sells direct to every individual in your street, instead you can work collectively and get much higher economies. This is exactly what one laptop per child is doing. They have a massed network with a few people who are connected with the outside bleed out to the rest of the Internet but everyone internally then is stronger. But that is ok because, some pro-Africans are getting it and they won't go back to the western world right?! Eventually it will of course go back to the Western world.

So piracy is really compelling. Take Bittorent. There is no commercial offering that can compete with this, at any price unless government buys the argument that this is terrifying and the only way to stop it is perfect enforcement and at least in America that is definitely happening. So one possible scenario – and a likely one – right now is your computer watches you and when you infringe on a law you are simply automatically punished. This might quite simply be a fine, but it might be other kinds of punishment as well. But we are certainly going to full surveillance, perfect enforcement as a solution to the problem of piracy. And what is ironically between these two poles of a hundred percent enforcement and total piracy, the open source world is actually a middle path even though the copyright world sees this as a horrible world and that is because the open source actually talks about rights. It talks about contracts. It actually sees what freedom is and values that, and it is a middle road.

So here is three things that are going to happen and they are in a collision of course.

1. Our permission society will expand. How far, we don't know.
2. Piracy is unstoppable at this point despite all the lawsuits; there is massive growth of piracy ever since Napster in Peer to Peer. So the majority Internet is for piracy.
3. "Free and Libre" colliding with the permission society and piracy.

Piracy is too good

What is going to happen? I think government unfortunately is going to be the one who chooses. They are either going to go with the police state or they will do nothing and we could go to piracy vs the others. But I think that the "Free & Libre" - open model, which is an associative of Creative Commons can actually force governments by showing a business model that may exist while still providing a lot of benefits to end-users of the piracy of the less rights model.

EXCERPT FROM THE REFLECTION ON JOHN BUCKMAN'S PRESENTATION

Bob Young: *Is there no future for 100 million dollar movies?*

John Buckman: *It occurs to me that I'm no longer in the music business and films are no longer in the film theatre business, we are both in the content manufacturing business, which we then leverage in a number of different platforms. Theatres being one of them. Theatres are not irrelevant, because people go to the theatre for a different experience, so I don't see why it would stop. They just need to realise and I think they do, that they sell a cultural product in a context.*

9

Is copyright doomed to disappear?

EVI WERKERS¹

1. NEW TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND PROTECTIONIST REACTIONS

In the course of time new technologies (radio, television, video recorder, audio, cable, satellite, etc.) have always caused cultural shocks and panic amongst the traditional content providers and copyright holders. The emergence of audiovisual media for example was followed with Argus' eyes by the print media who dreaded a total loss of their income. Yet new media did not replace traditional media. Instead they complemented them and provided new economic opportunities. The new distribution channels also alarmed copyright holders who used copyright as a weapon to prevent new uses or tried to get an additional copyright protection and equitable remuneration for these new forms of (re)distribution through lobbying and taking matters to court. Sometimes the legislator/judge complied with their request, but sometimes he would not hear of it because higher values were considered to be at stake such as social interests² or technological innovation³. Copyright has always been at war with technology, but authors have never achieved complete control over all possible uses of their works and they never will. Certain uses simply cannot be prevented nor forbidden⁴.

During the 21st Century new technological developments - more specifically digitization and convergence - have led to the same protectionist reactions by the same parties. Digitization enabled us to share enormous amounts of information and works protected by copyright through broadband networks at a very high speed and low transaction costs, but also to make high quality copies without much effort. In the media context we can witness the convergence of the different traditional media players (print, audiovisual media) taking their first steps on the interactive net and discovering new exploitation methods⁵ and a large group of internet born media players⁶ offering the same media services. On the other hand a convergence can be observed of professional and semi-professional players. The internet has considerably lowered the threshold and made it possible for everyone to publish their own content on a worldwide scale without having to count upon intermediaries providing the technological and financial support. Content is no longer the exclusive property or privilege of traditional media players who decide what fits in the context of their brand, what will attract their target audience or increase their profit. You don't need a professional card to be active on the internet. Citizens themselves can provide content, rank/rate it and share it with other users through new communication tools (weblogs, fora etcetera).

2. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE LEGISLATOR IN THIS AGE OF CONVERGENCE?

Throughout history we can observe a tendency to regulate media separately and in accordance with their (presumed) social impact. Whereas the print media are regulated by “soft law”, the audiovisual media are put under a rather strict licensing system. No one really questioned this, but the emergence of the internet has (re)opened the debate whether this separate regulation can be upheld. It seems quite unavoidable that newspapers, broadcasters, content aggregators with an editorial control over the content they transmit, shall soon all be subjected to the same media regulation⁷, irrespective of the underlying technology.

I believe the role of the regulator will continue to grow in this age of convergence, provided there is social and technological support⁸. Whereas several years ago the internet might have been perceived as a free virtual borderless zone in which rules did not apply, recent developments have pointed out that such an opinion is no longer sustainable. On the one hand, the fundamental rights of freedom of expression and access to information have never been exercised so much by the general public. Since the internet is open as a platform to everyone, it goes without saying that the free flow of information has multiplied and will continue to do so. This is a good case for democracy, the democratic debate and media pluralism since the new media counterbalance the mainstream media. On the other hand, the internet has raised many new legal issues and problems which call for regulatory intervention. The internet - as a new and (rather) anonymous communication tool - is not only used for honorable goals⁹. The flows of illegal and harmful content such as child pornography, fraud, copyright infringements, piracy, libel and defamation, infringement of privacy etcetera remind us of the dark side of the internet every day. Such problems - which are a threat to the basic values of a democratic society - cannot be solely left into the hands of the internet (community/technology) and the free market mechanisms¹⁰. Hence, there has been a considerable increase of regulatory intervention on the different levels of the internet¹¹. The most disputed legal intervention today concerns the over-protective European copyright legislation which was adapted¹² to respond to the new technological challenges.

3. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN COPYRIGHT AND THE RIGHTS OF USERS

From the point of view of users, copyright has become the economic weapon of protection of big media content industries. The past decennium they have successfully pleaded for uncompromising regulatory restrictions/prohibitions and an expansion of copyright protection under the pretext of fighting piracy. As a consequence there has been an extension of the term of protection (70/50 years), an expansion of scope in materiae¹³ and an expansion of exploitation rights (reproduction, communication works to the public, distribution)¹⁴. But the clearance of rights in the new information society has become a Sisyphean challenge because of various problems connected to copyright, namely 1) multiple ownership¹⁵, 2) diverse right management systems¹⁶, 3) untraceable copyright holders 4) the rigid regulation with regard to licensing agreements, 5) the inconsistency and lack of clarity of copyright legislation due to the successive European directives and the different national copyright traditions (continental/common law) which have to be taken into account¹⁷.

Their most eye catching victory however is the legal protection for digital rights management techniques,

the circumvention of which is punished with very high legal penalties. Legal enforcement is no longer defined by balanced legislation but by digital technologies which copyright holders chose¹⁸. Copyright owners now claim to have the exclusive right on every idea/information expressed in a tangible form and to control any computer-mediated use and re-use (adaptation) of their works, hence narrowing the public domain and the rights of users¹⁹. Have the rights of users completely been neglected by the legislator then? No, European copyright foresees several exceptions to safeguard the interests of society and users²⁰, but these are phrased (and interpreted) in such a restrictive, incoherent and technology-specific way that they cannot counterbalance the broadly defined exploitation rights. Moreover DRM can perfectly block these exceptions²¹. As a result users seek ways to circumvent DRM and re-use/share copyright protected works freely²². In sum, there is a growing strained relation between copyright protection and the right of users to have access to information and ideas, to make fair use of works, to freely express themselves and create new things²³. Obviously there is not one overall remedy to solve these various problems, but the current legislation clearly needs improvement in terms of transparency, consistency and flexibility.

4. HOW SHOULD BE DEALT WITH THIS CONFLICT IN THE FUTURE?

The solution is not the abolition of copyright but the restoration of balance between on the one hand new uses enabled by technological developments, the freedom of expression (creativity) and its correlated freedom of information and on the other hand, the protection provided by copyright of original works²⁴. Many users and even holders of copyright have lost their faith in current copyright, but the basic copyright values remained unaffected. Throughout the world, everyone agrees that original works deserve to be protected by copyright and that authors should obtain a fair compensation. How could the social acceptance of copyright be reinforced?

The (cultural) roots of copyright have to be rediscovered, namely to protect and stimulate creativity whilst keeping a good balance with the interests of the public instead of barring creativity, access to information/knowledge, innovation and new uses (re-uses). Some still deny there is a conflict in the first place since copyright does not protect mere ideas, only original expressions of ideas in a tangible form (the so-called dichotomy idea / expression)²⁵. This is right in theory, but in practice we can observe that even with regard to purely “information”, copyright protection is claimed. The notion “originality” should be given its initial meaning again. In addition a positive definition should be given to the public domain (“the commons”)²⁶. Another basis upon which the overbroad copyright protection can be halted is simply founded upon the hierarchy and precedence of norms. Freedom of expression has been laid down as a fundamental right in several International Human Rights Treaties and national constitutions and should be taken as a point of departure. Copyright legislation - which (sometimes) restricts the freedom of expression of users - should be examined for compatibility with the criteria set out by article 10.2. of the ECHR²⁷. Although copyright internalizes the conflict in the shape of the exceptions, judges must not fear to check the proportionate character of copyright and to set copyright protection aside when it fails the test²⁸. Finally, the legal principle of abuse of rights could be invoked as a safety measure in case copyright legislation itself fails²⁹.

Furthermore the current copyright legislation as a whole should be revised. With regard to the extended exploitation rights of authors, it is obvious that the term of protection should be shortened and that clarity should be given with regard to the overlap of those rights on the internet and the compensation system

connected to it³⁰. User's rights which have been curtailed excessively should be extended by analogy with the comprehensive exploitation rights of copyright holders³¹. It is impossible to foresee all new technologies/uses, so instead of limiting exceptions according to an analogue and/or digital exploitation, exceptions should be stipulated in a technologically neutral way. With regard to copyright ownership, the regulator should stimulate transparent information to facilitate the identification of the copyright holder and the licensing terms³². In case of collaborative works³³ however this would not be sufficient, since exploitations require the license of all coauthors and can be blocked by the simple refusal of one co-author. Either a legal presumption centralizing all rights concerned into the hands of a representative, or a collective rights management system seem to be the only solution there³⁴. The legal protection of DRM technologies should be limited to user-friendly DRM technologies, respecting the rights of users³⁵ and correctly informing them upon certain restrictive limitations of use.

With regard to copyright licenses, the development of voluntary flexible licenses such as Creative Commons licenses should be welcomed, though many right holders and users still have to get familiar with the "some rights reserved". Yet we mustn't forget that in many cases authors don't have any freedom of choice. An employee for example is in an economic weak position and can be easily forced by his employer to transfer all his rights. Furthermore, many authors do not wish to manage their rights individually and join copyright associations that use standard contracts by which members transfer all their rights. Hence, (a) flexible licensing system(s) adapted to the digital environment and irrespective of the status of the right holder³⁶ after the example of the CC licenses should be enforced by the legislator. When licensing is impossible, statutory licenses can ensure the author still receives a fair compensation³⁷.

One last problem concerns the territorial and tradition-bounded character of copyright. There is reason to be optimistic: the recent initiatives taken at WIPO and EU level harmonized many aspects of copyright. The final ambition should be the development of a European-wide copyright along the lines of other intellectual property rights such as the European Community Trademark³⁸.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

I am confident that new initiatives will be taken to restore the disrupted balance in the current copyright legislation. Both from a social and economic point of view there is a need for a legitimate, transparent, future-proof and flexible copyright system which meets the interests of users (consumers and creators) and right holders. It will be one of the biggest challenges for policy makers in the forthcoming years.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Legal Researcher at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Law and ICT (ICRI –K.U. Leuven) specializing in copyright and media law.
- 2 for example copies for educational purposes, citations by the press, etcetera
- 3 for example the invention of the video recorder making it possible for consumers to make private copies of broadcasts, as the Supreme Court of the United states declared in the Sony Betamax case (Sony Corp. of America v. Universal Studios, Inc., 464 U.S. 417 (1984))
- 4 L. LESSIG, *Free Culture. How Big Media uses technology and the New Law to lock down Culture and Control Creativity*, The Penguin Press, New York, 2004, 77-78
- 5 internet radio, video-on-demand, print-on-demand, etcetera
- 6 telecom providers offering news services, content aggregators, etcetera
- 7 with regard to protection of minors, advertising, duty of identification, right of reply regime etcetera
- 8 L. LESSIG, *Code Version 2.0.*, Basci Books Group, New York, 2006, 122-123
- 9 L. LESSIG, *l.c.*, 2006, ix, 19
- 10 Contra L. LESSIG, *o.c.*, 2006, 27 ; J. ZITTRAIN, “The generative internet”, Harvard Law Review, Berkman Center Research Publication n° 2006/1, (1974)1980
- 11 Y. BENKLER, *The Wealth of Networks. How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2006, 392
- 12 European copyright has been developed step by step. The European “acquis communautaire” consisted of several - mostly technology specific – Directives before new initiatives were taken.
- 13 Every idea in a tangible form.
- 14 P.B. HUGENHOLTZ, M. VAN EECHOUD, S.J. VANGOMPEL e.a., Final Report for European Commission, DG Internal Market, November 2006, 36, 45-54, 83-91
- 15 multimedia works, transfer or rights by contract / legacy
- 16 DRM, individual or collectively (copyright association), voluntarily (by contract) or imposed by law (for example through extended collective licenses)
- 17 though European directives which together form the “acquis communautaire” did harmonize several aspects of copyright, they still leave a large margin of appreciation to Member States ; P.B. HUGENHOLTZ, M. VAN EECHOUD, S.J. VANGOMPEL e.a., *o.c.*, November 2006, 19-20, 160-166
- 18 L. LESSIG, *o.c.*, 2004, 146-147, 157
- 19 freedom to have access to information, consumer rights, privacy etcetera ; L. LESSIG, *o.c.*, 2004, 87-89 ; Y. BENKLER, *o.c.*, 440
- 20 i.e. situations in which the user does not have to obtain a license and is not committing a copyright infringement when making use of that in work under the limitations set by the law
- 21 The European legislator did foresee a procedure to oblige right holders to take (voluntary) measures to enable some exceptions (not all), but in such a vague way that it has not helped users much so far.
- 22 For example through peer to peer networks.
- 23 R. GROSS, “Intellectual property rights and the information commons” in R.F. JORGENSEN (ed.), *Human Rights in the Global Information Society*, MIT Press, London, 2006, 107-109
- 24 P.B. HUGENHOLTZ, M. VAN EECHOUD, S.J. VANGOMPEL e.a., *o.c.*, November 2006, 7-8 212 ; L. LESSIG, *o.c.*, 2004, 128, 169
- 25 F. DUBUISSON, “Quand le droit du public à l’information rencontre les droits sur l’information: vrai ou faux débat?” in A. STROWEL et F. TULKENS, *Droit d’auteur et liberté d’expression*, Editions

- Laricer, 2006, (71)95; L. LESSIG, o.c., 2006, 269 ;
- 26 C. GEIGER, "Copyright and free access to information: for a fair balance of interests in a globalised world", E.I.P.R. 2006, (366)369 ; L. LESSIG, o.c., 2006, 198
- 27 Article 10.2 European Convention on Human Rights stipulates three conditions: restrictions on the freedom of expression have to be provided by law (legality), be necessary in a democratic society for a legitimate interest (for example the right of others such as copyright) and proportional ; .S CORBETT, "A human rights perspective on the database perspective", E.I.P.R. 2006/2, (83)88 ; C. GEIGER, "Constitutionalising Intellectual property law? The influence of fundamental rights on intellectual property in the European Union", I.I.C. 2006/4, Vol. 37, (371)385 ; D. VOORHOOF, "La liberté d'expression est-elle un argument légitime en faveur du non-respect du droit d'auteur?" in A. STROWEL et F. TULKENS, *Droit d'auteur et liberté d'expression*, Editions Laricer, 2006, (39)69
- 28 P.B. HUGENHOLTZ, "Copyright and freedom of expression in Europe", available at <http://www.ivir.nl/medewerkers/hugenholtz.html>, 16 p. ; A. STROWEL et F. TULKENS, "Equilibrer la liberté d'expression et le droit d'auteur. À propos des libertés de créer et d'user des oeuvres" in A. STROWEL et F. TULKENS, *Droit d'auteur et liberté d'expression*, Editions Laricer, 2006, (9)36
- 29 H. COHEN JEHOAM, "Auteursrecht en expressievrijheid, misbruik van recht en standaardchicane, Nederlandse en Amerikaanse benaderingen", A.M. (24)30-31 ; A. LUCAS, "Droit d'auteur, liberté d'expression et droit du public à l'information" in A. STROWEL et F. TULKENS, *Droit d'auteur et liberté d'expression*, Editions Laricer, 2006, (123)140-141 ; A. VAN ROOIJEN, "Liever misbruikt dan misplaatst auteursrecht: het doelcriterium ingezet tegen oneigenlijk auteursrechtgebruik", A.M.I. 2006/2, 45
- 30 P.B. HUGENHOLTZ, M. VAN EECHOUD, S.J. VANGOMPEL e.a., o.c., 54-55, 58-59, 132-134
- 31 L. LESSIG, o.c., 2004, 169 ; L. LESSIG, o.c., 2006, 189
- 32 P.B. HUGENHOLTZ, M. VAN EECHOUD, S.J. VANGOMPEL e.a., o.c., 179 ; L. LESSIG, o.c., 2006, 175 (a "copy duty")
- 33 Especially in cases of multimedia works, this is a considerable problem.
- 34 For example the initiative taker, a copyright association, a public authority ; P.B. HUGENHOLTZ, M. VAN EECHOUD, S.J. VANGOMPEL e.a., o.c., 170-177 ; L. LESSIG, o.c., 2004, 103
- 35 C. GEIGER, l.c., 2006, (366)372
- 36 who might be employee, employer, principal, freelancer, producer etcetera
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10

Niches of quality

for the Meeting of Minds (Antwerp 2007): "The User is the Content"

ANA PEJGINOVA

The language used in the e-world is typically predominated by economic and technological discourse: for instance, networking, market, business model, user behavior, content providers, consumer preferences, etc. "The User is the Content," a quote from Marshal McLuhan and the title of this "Meeting of Minds," is a symptom of the phenomenon of what I will term here as "economification" - that is, fortification within economic models - of non-economic activities. In this text, I shall juxtapose the free market model, on the one hand, and education, science and culture (ESC further below), on the other, within digital culture; more specifically, I shall be dealing with the undesirable consequences of commodification of information vs. the Open Access principle.

Applying models from one field of human activity to another usually produces revealing results and allows new approaches to old themes. However, not all applications are exclusively successful. When the free market model is applied to non-profit activities, the disadvantages of such approach can, in some cases, outweigh the intended benefits. When the "content" of the electronic resource within a market model belongs to the realm of ESC, the very nature of the content resists such treatment. To which degree do art-lovers and scholars fit into the categories of "users" and "consumers"? Do artists and thinkers fit into "content-providers" and "producers"? To which degree do beauty, meaning, wisdom, experience and emotion fit into the categories of "product" and "content"?

They certainly fit somehow, but in a way that paralyses them significantly. Information, or content, does not necessarily mean knowledge, meaning or thought. Producers do not imply value, art, or experience. The way an art-lover enjoys a work of art can hardly be termed as consumption. In the case of ESC, we see how



economic and technological jargon can bring de-signification of the topic. The reductionism needed to cast technical, quantitative and qualitative categories together gives ground to un-differentiating approach and treatment. At a price paid to level quality, value and meaning, three immeasurable and non-commensurable categories - and the very *raison d'être* of education, science and culture.

FREE MARKET VS. OPEN ACCESS

The “economification” of ESC does not merely imply use of economic jargon or reduction of meaning to mere information. It also includes commodification of information, which is a part of the larger and longer globalization process¹. This turn has been legitimized in the public discourse with arguments from the liberal economic market model². Meanwhile, some negative side-effects of the commodifying process have motivated large-scale counter-response noticeable today in form of Open Access (OA) movement, a set of diverse and loosely connected local and international initiatives which aim at liberating scientific, artistic and cultural works from commodification and monopolization. In which aspects does OA counter the free market?

Obviously, the free market rules ideally should motivate maximum initiative, flexibility, high quality for competitive fees, consumer-oriented services, and continuous innovation of products. In a free market economy, the state benefits from the taxes collected from the private sector, which it then redistributes to social services and non-profitable sectors, ESC being one of them. Thus, in theory, the economic benefit for some should be the benefit for all. However, the problem occurs in practice, when non-profit creations and non/material commons are privatized, commodified and even monopolized. It is my opinion that the free market effects are of benefit for both the profit- and the non-profit sector only if special niches, such as ESC and non-material commons, are protected from the process of commodification.

While competitiveness is the motivator for free market behavior; sharing and collaboration are the motivators for ESC – ideas come as novel emergent properties of the total human knowledge and experience. ESC creations rarely have clear boundaries and they enter existence within relation to previous creations. While the rules of the market push firms/products to competitive extinction; art works, for instance, can and should co-exist, where their quality brings no collateral damage (one can even argue that their coexistence is mutually beneficial). A Munch painting does not make a Michelangelo obsolete, in the way gramophone was made obsolete by the CD-player. While economic interest deflates when the market is satiated, the field of ESC is insatiable – can there ever be too much beauty, experience and knowledge? The substantial difference between ESC creations and commodities has been elaborated at great length elsewhere³, but I hope that the unusual, or rather “uncommodifiable” nature of what ESC has uniquely to offer is already apparent.

THE CASE OF SCIENCE

A good example of how free market economy can have the unintended consequence of being detrimental to its agents, is scientific e-publishing. Science is literally dependent on knowledge sharing. In the last decade, e-publishers have formed near-monopolies on scientific content, barring it behind considerable access fees. Here is how the money flow gets perverted in this case:

Scientists usually are funded by state-sponsored agencies and institutes. The academia demands that its members publish on a regular basis; due to the high publishing fees, it is the home institution that usually pays the cost (not a fee to the scientist, but a fee to the publisher). Students, researchers, other scientists and interested amateurs pay a fee to the publisher in order to access scientific research databases. The access fees can be so high, that one may need to be affiliated to an organization (often state-funded) which pays collective access and enables its members to use the content fully and freely.

All in all, the public, or the state, pays twice for science: once to fund the research, and then to access the results of what they have already funded. The publisher is paid twice: by the academia and by the database users. The scientist is paid once, by the academia. We seem to have confused our values in this case, accepting an economic model that favors the ones who provide the medium, the instrument of communication, but neither the value, nor the ones who can enjoy and use that value. Moreover, we have accepted private barriers on shareable knowledge and experience that is supposed to be humanity commons.

OPEN ACCESS INITIATIVES

Open Access for education, science and culture, in a nutshell, means digital works, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright restrictions. In response to the rising publishing and access fees of conglomerate e-publishers, a number of scholarly institutions have been recently canceling contracts with for-profit e-publishers and now offer free online access to their works (see the Directory of Open Access Journals for an extensive listing, and Peter Suber's reports on the process phases). The OA argument is not against profit work, but for de-monopolization of access, tools, rights and fees for ESC-relevant works. Such moderate-line initiatives are at work not only in e-resources, but in the oldest OA initiative, OSS (Open Source Software), in Digital Rights Management (Creative Commons), and elsewhere.

The OA Initiative has been promoted by the UN, the EU, and international NGOs⁴, but most governments still have not gone much further than doing lip service to such projects, refraining from interference in the private publishing sector. On the other hand, it must be mentioned that the strength of OA is visible in its diversity and locality, appearing in different cultures, countries and sub-sectors, without governmental initiatives, public awareness campaigns or much support from the mainstream media.

*Like terrorism,
a definition is lacking
for copyright
but severe (legal)
punishments are in place.*

Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that it was precisely the private sector that taught the non-profiters how to utilize ICT and apply useful business models to enhance their own effectiveness. Undoubtedly, the non-profit sector benefits from partnership with the private sector, when applying adjusted business and technological models in promoting its unique value. Still, it is of priority to ride the wave and not to be ridden by the wave of technological and economic changes, not to let the instrument change its applicant's cardinal goal and not let the instrument become a goal in itself.

CONCLUSION

Although the digital world provides a new medium for ESC, the latter create non-commensurable quality, and not quantifiable material items. If treated as “privatizable” commodities, they lose in value. At present, there is considerable pressure toward commodification of education, science and culture. If ESC works are put under barriers of access fees and privileges, development of knowledge will be impeded and thus the society, and even the profiteers in the long run, will be at loss. The ESC sector must be spared the commodifying game; state and society must develop institutional framework for preserving special niches for these non-material commons of humanity.

(ENDNOTES)

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- 3 See also John Barlow’s Economy of Ideas.
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COLOPHON

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